

571. Interaction of the mores and the evil eye.
 The doctrine
 of the evil eye is plainly an immediate deduction
 from demonism.
 If the atmosphere is full of demons, surrounding
 us all, agents
 of all things which happen and affect our
 interests, human wel-
 fare depends either on their uncontrollable caprice,
 or on devices
 by which they can be controlled. In the former
 case human
 beings need to have omens, oracles, rites of
 divination, etc., to
 find out what is to be. In the latter case all
 devices of magic
 and sorcery are of the highest value to men. This
 is why magic
 is so ultimate and original in the history of
 civilization. It teaches
 men *not* to look for any rational causation in the
 order of things,
 and to believe in the efficacy of ritual proceedings
 which contain
 no rational relation of means to ends. Then it
 costs no effort
 to believe that one person can bewitch
 another, and do it
 unconsciously. Any relation of responsibility can
 be invented
 and believed, since there are no tests of agency.
 It follows
 that a new function is opened for the mores.
 They have to
 select and establish those relations of agency and
 responsibility
 which are to be believed in; that is, they define
 crimes and
 criminal responsibility. Ordeals as tests fall in
 with the same
 system. They touch no actual relations and
 therefore prove
 nothing. It is the mores which establish faith in
 them and give
 them the sanction of the society. As to the
 evil eye, as the
 evil result of envy and of prosperity, it is an *a*
posteriori inference
 from observed facts, exaggerated into a
 dogma. Cases of
 disaster in the hour of triumph occur, both as
 consequences of
 overweening self-confidence and by pure chance

(Caesar, Caesar
Borgia, Napoleon). The aleatory interest always
averages up,
but the successful, who have enjoyed good
fortune for a time,
believe that it must last for them, and forget
that the balance
requires bad luck. The lookers-on, however,
form their philos-
ophy from what they see. They believe in
Nemesis, or other
doctrine of offsets, and try by vituperation to
make artificial
offsets which will avert greater and more real
calamities. In all
steps of these doctrines and acts the mores are
called into play.
They are the only limits to the applications of
the doctrines.
They are of little use. They are afloat in and
with the faiths